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The evangelical Preacher, a faithful, and an affectionate Preacher of CHRIST.

A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. LEONARD WORCESTER,

TO THE

PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

CHURCH IN PEACHAM, VERMONT,

OCTOBER 30th, 1799. *K*

By **SAMUEL AUSTIN, A. M.**

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN WORCESTER.

PEACHAM, VERMONT,
Printed by **FARLEY & GOSS.**

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AN

ORDINATION SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 5.

*For we preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;
and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

MY BRETHREN,



THE present occasion is different from most others, in which we are called to address sermons to christian auditories. It is the solemn season of the consecration of a fellow laborer, a friend, a brother, to the high office of a Bishop in the Church of Christ. It is the season of the solemnization of a kind of spiritual marriage, between the pastor elect, and you, my brethren and sisters, of this branch of the kingdom of our Savior. It is the season, in which he undertakes to become your instructor, and guide; and in which you undertake to become subject to his instruction, and guidance, in the great concerns of your eternal salvation. Can there be a more interesting day to him, or to you, than this? Can there be

be a more solemn transaction, short of the great day of our final account? Being requested to aid your devotions, and to consult your improvement, as preacher on this occasion, I am anxious not to sink the solemnity of the scene by a trifling subject, or an unhallowed sentiment. Will you aid me by your attention and prayers? Will you forgive what may seem impertinent? Will you receive, with the meekness of wisdom, what shall appear to be supported by unquestionable, that is, scripture authority?

The words of our text are an avowal of one of the greatest preachers that ever lived. They are a declaration of Paul, than whom, saving his divine Master, there is not a more splendid character delineated in the sacred volume. This Apostle entered into the spirit, he felt the weight, he abounded in the labors of his high, and holy calling. Naturally ardent, and supernaturally inflamed with a tender love to his Lord, he gave himself wholly to the work of propagating the christian doctrine. He was always on the pursuit, always foremost in the spiritual battle. Whether at liberty, or in bonds; in his own, or in a foreign country; among his acquaintance, or among strangers, it was all the same. He was every where the intelligent, the indefatigable, the affectionate, and what is even more, the inspired Preacher of the Gospel. Has he not set before all the Ministers of Christ one of the finest preaching examples? If we would learn our duty, shall we not do well to sit as learners at the feet of this Apostle? Does he not make a reasonable challenge, when he says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ?"*

Now in the words of the text, Paul presents to us a comprehensive statement of the nature of the ministry, which he, and his colleagues in the apostleship discharged. He exhibits the work, about which they were so laborious. It was *preaching*.
He

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

He suggests to us the matter of his preaching. It was "*Christ Jesus the Lord.*" He exposes to us the principle from which it sprung. It was the love of this Jesus; "*for Jesus' sake.*" He designates the end in effect, which this scene of labor embraced. It was the everlasting salvation of those, to whom they preached; "*and ourselves your servants.*" Of course, the passage offers to our consideration, the religious principle, by which the real christian Minister is actuated, the nature of the work, in which he is employed, and the beneficent end, to which his employment is directed. These three points constitute the plan of this discourse. When these are sufficiently illustrated, we shall subjoin a few inferences, and such summary addresses, as propriety shall seem to dictate.

I. We are to consider the religious principle, by which the real christian Minister is actuated; "*for Jesus' sake.*" A supreme love to Jesus is the sovereign, the all controlling principle, which warms the heart, sanctifies the capacities, rouses the exertions, and signalizes the efforts of the genuine christian Minister. He, in the first place, becomes a friend to Jesus himself. "*But first gave their own selves to the Lord.*"* A friend! But is not every body Christ's friend? Can there be any one found, you will perhaps say, so atrociously wicked, so lost to all that is morally lovely, so completely a child of the devil, as not to feel friendship to that holy Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world, who is God manifest in the flesh, and altogether lovely? Are not all, at least, who are trained up under the light of the Gospel, friendly to this, its adorable Author? No, my brethren. Taking candid observation of men and things, and the holy scriptures for our guide, we shall be forced to admit, that man, as a fallen creature, is a foe, even an inveterate and irreconcilable foe, to the blessed Redeemer. Christ
has

has given us one of the best tests of real affection in the world, that is, *obedience*. — “ *If a man love me he will keep my words.*” * The affectionate subject is always obedient to his Prince. The affectionate wife is always obedient to her husband. The affectionate child is always obedient to his parent. And the affectionate servant is always obedient to his master. Deliberate disobedience is a sure proof of aversion. If this disobedience be universal, persevering, and incorrigible, resisting thousands of remonstrances, the tenderest proffers, and the most terrible denunciations ; it amounts—to what ? To more than proof, that the heart is at war with the being disobeyed. But how is it ? Is the natural man, the unbeliever, obedient to Christ ? What ! when he is impenitent and unbelieving ; i. e. wholly destitute of the primitive emotions, and radical principles of all obedience ? Does not the scripture, when it informs us that “ without faith it is impossible to please God,” leave on our minds the irresistible conclusion, that the sinner’s course of action is exclusive of every act of obedience, that he is altogether, perseveringly, and obstinately disobedient, therefore altogether an enemy ? Does not the abounding wickedness of the impenitent world ; wickedness which convulses families, towns, and nations, proclaim the same melancholy truth ? Does not persecution, in all its forms, augment the evidence ? Does not the scripture expressly say, that it is the practical language of all unrenewed men, “ We will not have this man to reign over us ?” † Does not Christ himself testify, “ Now they have seen, and hated, both me and my father ?” ‡ Every natural man, therefore, is an enemy to Christ ; and is wholly disqualified, from this single circumstance, to preach the Gospel. He lacks the grand prerequisite. It is as absurd to put him to preaching, as it would be for a government

to

* John xiv. 23.

† Luke xix. 14.

‡ John xv. 24.

to send a most violent, and implacable enemy to itself, to negotiate with a foreign, and unfriendly nation in its behalf. It is as absurd, as to employ the ringleader of a gang of counterfeiters, to suppress counterfeiting. The pulpit and such a man as little agree, as the heat of July with the freezing winds of December. That there are many of this description, in this, and other countries, men, who assume the profession of the christian Minister, and undertake the work of preaching the Gospel, without the least friendship to its Author, is not to be questioned. Charity does not oblige you to believe, my brethren, that every Minister is a good man, because he is a Minister. There are those, who can make a trade of preaching, as well as of pleading. There are those, who come forward under the guise of friendship to Jesus Christ, and who pretend to preach his Gospel, who do but act over again the part of Judas Iscariot, and whose attacks upon the divine glory, the sovereignty, the doctrines, the people, and the religion of Christ, are the most vehement. Hence so many, who, instead of preaching Jesus Christ, preach themselves; and who, instead of taking the humble place of a servant, take the seat of the scornful, and are more concerned to be ministered unto, than to minister. Hence the rancor, with which error is propagated. And hence the phlegm of dislike, with which one Minister often treats another. But though I think a hypocritical Minister, who comes into public view under the pretence of preaching Christ, and really preaches nothing but himself, is the most detestable of all characters, not excepting even the champions of infidelity and atheism; yet I did not take up this subject, nor enter this place of speaking, with a design to inveigh against any class of men. These observations have a different object. They are designed to impress on your minds the total unmeetness of an unrenewed man for the christian profession, and the christian ministry; the
absolute

absolute necessity of special grace to form the preacher of Christ ; and the nature, and excellence of that spirit, which that grace produceth in the soul, and which is the spring of all evangelical, and ministerial exertion. This spirit is *love*, supreme love to Christ, a heart to labor, to suffer, to endure for his sake. This is the primary qualification of the true christian Preacher, a qualification, derived, not from classical erudition or theologic instructions ; but from the pure fountain of recovering grace, from the illuminating, and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."* "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."† How conspicuously did this supreme attachment to Christ appear in the apostles ? How did it burn in their hearts, glow in the language they used, and give energy to the astonishing exertions they put forth ? How diminutive, how worthless, how odious did it make them appear in their own eyes. "We are the circumcision," says, Paul, "who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no confidence in the flesh*."‡ "The love of Christ constraineth us."§ But what is it to love Christ ? What is the nature of this affection, by which the good man, and the good Minister is primarily impelled ? True love, my brethren, is disinterested. It is exercised in a just view of, and terminates upon, the being beloved. It is an affection, which cleaves to the object as the shadow does to the body ; and is not capricious and perishable, like that love which originates in supreme self-regard. Jesus Christ is exhibited in the Bible. There he is displayed in his proper glory. The Bible may be considered as a history of Christ. It is the record which God has given of his Son. The chief intent of it was to offer Christ to our conceptions.

* Rom. v. 5. † 2 Cor. iv 6. ‡ Phil. iii. 3. § 2 Cor. v. 14.

tions. If we say, with the inquisitive Greeks, "Sirs, we would see Jesus," a studious examination of the Bible will satisfy our curiosity. There he is displayed as clearly as the sun in its meridian splendor, in the flames by which he is distinguished from all creatures, in the relative titles with which he is clothed, in the attributes which are ascribed to him, in the works he has performed, in the laws and institutions he has established, in the doctrinal instructions he has dispensed, in the conversations he has held, in the prayers he has offered, in the example he has drawn, in the propitiatory sufferings to which he has submitted, in the triumphs he has gained, in the church he has redeemed, organized, and preserved, in the grace he exercises, and in the judgments he executes, as delineated in the historic and preceptive parts of the scriptures. In view of his matchless glory, as he is here exhibited, and offered to sinners, the enraptured servant of Jesus, exclaims with believing Thomas, "My Lord, and my God!" In view of him, as here discovered to his understanding, the believer embraces him, loves him, trusts him, admires him, adores him, follows him, and patiently labors and suffers for his sake. This is the pious principle, by which every genuine Minister of the Gospel is actuated. This annihilates the pageantry of the world in his esteem. This sinks him low as the dust in his opinion of himself. This brings him down to the humble station of a servant, and expands his heart with a generous charity, reconciling him to the severest toils, and sufferings, for the recovery of other lost sinners to the same happy union to his admired Jesus.

Having ascertained the principle, by which every faithful Minister of the Gospel is actuated, let us proceed to consider,

II. The work to which he is to be devoted. This is preaching. Preaching may be considered as comprehending the whole of his official duty.

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This

This constitutes his peculiar employment. This is the complexion of all his exertions. The good Minister preaches, not only in his sermons, but in his prayers, in his study, in his family, in his sufferings for Christ's sake, in his charities, in his conversation, in his example, in his visits, when he is in the pulpit, when he is conversing with you on the concerns of your souls, when he is by the bedside of the dying person, when he is with his christian brethren at the sacramental solemnity, and when he is with the world, he is the *preacher*. Even his occasional attention to the wants of his family, and the means of living, should be of the nature of preaching. If it be not, it is inordinate ; it is an abandonment of his duty ; it is violence offered to his solemn consecration to the divine service. But as, in the ordinary use of language, preaching is commonly appropriated to pulpit service, our observations shall, if you please, have a more particular respect to this part of it. In the pulpit, then, especially, the christian Minister is to appear, from Sabbath to Sabbath, as the *preacher*. But what is he to preach ? Guided by our text, and therefore without hazard of mistake, we answer, " not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord." Here is a negative, and a positive idea. The one is exclusive, and the other is appropriate. Let us attend briefly to each of them. And, what is to be understood by a man's preaching himself ? This kind of preaching, my brethren, is selfish preaching. Its sentiments are selfish. Its motives are selfish. Its end is selfish ; and its whole coloring is selfish. The peculiar opinions of the Antinomians, the Arminians, and the Universalists, originate from this principle, and are involved in this idea. This sort of preaching makes the propriety and obligation of our loving God depend on the evidence of his loving us. It squares the doctrines, and duties of christianity to supreme self-regard. It makes God the debtor, and man the creditor.

itor. It subordinates, not man to the Deity, but the Deity to man. A preacher of this sort, preaches, not what the Bible teaches for the truth, but what he will have to be true. His preaching sets forth the value of some mimic morality, under the name of virtue, more than the person of the Redeemer, or the glory of his sacrifice. He insists on that religion only, which is courtly, which is of easy practice, and which is consistent with the supreme pursuit of sensual pleasure. He is more concerned to reap the praise of a smooth diction, a harmonious voice, and a graceful elocution, of liberality and catholicism, than the glory of martyrdom. A deep awe of God, and the zeal of an Apostle, you cannot impute to him. He feels more for his own glory, than for the glory of his Maker. When he ascends the pulpit, he is full of himself. The language, which his deportment utters to hearing ears, is, I pray you, good people, see what a wonderful person I am. Some preachers, of this description, the great, modern, moral poet, Cowper, has certainly not inelegantly, nor inaccurately described, in the following lines :

“ And thus it is. The pastor, either vain
 “ By nature, or by flattery made so, taught,
 “ To gaze at his own splendor, and to exalt,
 “ Absurdly, not his office, but himself,
 “ Or unenlightened, and too proud to learn,
 “ Or vicious, and not therefore apt to teach,
 “ Perverting often by the stress of lewd,
 “ And loose example, whom he should instruct,
 “ Exposés, and holds up to broad disgrace,
 “ The noblest function, and discredits much
 “ The brightest truths that man has ever seen.”*

2. Let us attend next to the positive idea. “ But Christ Jesus the Lord.” What is it to preach Christ Jesus the Lord? This is not, as some have unwittingly imagined, merely to repeat over the name of Christ a hundred times in a sermon. Neither

then is it to preach a Savior, or a system, of mercy, excluding the essential attribute of justice. Nor is it to preach a licentious doctrine of grace, which disencumbers man from the eternal obligations of the divine law. No. When the Apostles preach Christ, do they not go into a copious delineation of his uncreated glory, his prerogatives, his eternal purposes, the covenants of redemption and grace which he executes, his law, his government, his incarnation, the lost condition of the world which he savingly visits, his holiness, the holiness which he requires, his sovereignty in the salvation of all who are saved, and in the damnation of all who are damned? Do they not exhibit him as the final judge of all mankind, therefore as clothed with vindictive justice, as well as with grace? Do they not assure us that their preaching "does not make void, but establish the law?"* To preach Jesus Christ, then, in the most extensive view, is to declare, with frankness, with zeal, with persevering fidelity, without deceitful glosses, and loose accommodations to carnal reason, the whole counsel of God, as contained in the holy scriptures, which are, in fact, the message of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all intelligent creatures, to men, who are his subjects. If what has been said be true, that the Bible may be considered as a history of Christ; or if Christ's own observation be just, that the scriptures testify of him, to preach the unalterable obligations, the doctrines, the facts, the promises, and the denunciations of the Bible, is to preach Christ. To descend to a few particulars. He who preaches Christ will display, in a just view, his personal dignity. He will preach him in his uncreated, and eternal glory; therefore, he will insist upon his absolute godhead, combating, with candor, but with zeal, the Sabellian, the Arian, and the Socinian heresies. For the Apostle John testifies of Christ, "This is the true God, and eternal life."† He will

* Rom. iii. 31.

† 1 John v. 20.

will lead his hearers to contemplate him, as existing in the form of God, antecedent to his being found in fashion as a man. For, "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."* He will not, therefore, preach him as a preexistent creature merely, or as a creature possessed by, and manifesting God; but as God, the Creator and Lord of the universe, united, in his incarnate state, to a mere man; not as a peccable, changeable, superangelic being; but as having "a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."† He will preach him in his works, not as blundering upon a system, either of creation, providence, or redemption, and miserably accommodating his efforts to the exigency of his affairs, as the supposed abuse of liberty in his creatures might disadjust his plan, which would be wholly unworthy of his unlimited perfection of nature; but as ever acting with the dignity of perfect antecedent, and irresistible contrivance. He will, therefore, preach the essential christian doctrine of the decrees; that "of him, and to him, and through him are all things."‡ He will preach Christ Jesus the Lord, not as a debtor to the good works of man, which are all extremely bad, but as saving "that which was lost;" saving, according to his own good pleasure, and in a manner, which refers the whole work of the salvation of those who are redeemed to his purpose, propitiation, and power; and which makes the redeemed soul wholly a debtor to the riches and sovereignty of his grace. He will, therefore, preach, intelligibly and clearly, the essential christian doctrines of personal, eternal election; of special grace; of regeneration; of sanctification; and perseverance unto the end. He will throw sinners at the feet of sovereign mercy, and
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* Phil. ii. 6, 7. † Phil. ii. 10. ‡ Rom. xi. 36.

put the language of the transported Apostle into the mouths of all his christian brethren, who are established in Christ as living stones : " What shall we then say to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us ? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died : Yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who hath loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

He will preach Christ, not as a bad being, who has been maintaining an unjustifiable controversy with the sinner, and who, therefore, ought, in equity, to come over to the sinner, be reconciled to him, and justify his conduct while such ; but as a perfectly holy being, with whom the sinner is iniquitously contending ; for whose want of immediate reconciliation, there is not, and cannot be, the least imaginable excuse. He will, therefore, preach the obligation of immediate repentance, and the infinite guilt and hazard of a moment's delay. He will preach Christ, not as a Savior saving in sin, abating the demands of the moral law, and opening the gates of heaven to unholy people : But as having " given himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

* Rom. viii. 31, &c.

ish."* He will, therefore, bind his fellow christians to the most conspicuous piety; insisting, that they are taken out of the world to be as a city set on a hill; that they are "ordained, that they should go and bring forth much fruit;"† and that every conformity to the world contradicts the whole spirit of the Gospel, as a system of grace, which teacheth, more forcibly than even the law, "that denying ungodliness, and every worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in the world."‡

Again, He who preaches Christ faithfully, will preach the atonement consummated in his death, as the only ground of a sinner's justification, and acceptance before God. Jesus Christ sustained extreme sufferings, and died an ignominious death. For what? Not unintentionally, and in disappointment. "For he was crucified and slain, being delivered by the determinate counsel, and foreknowledge of God."§ Not for his own sins. For "he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."¶ Not in mere testimony to his doctrine, and as an example of patience. For in this respect his sufferings and death import no more, nor do they take any higher rank than the sufferings of the Apostles, and thousands of martyrs to the truth. His death, then, as it was designed, must have been designed for some other purpose. For what purpose, I pray you? Let imagination go to work. For what purpose, but for that, which proves it to be the anti-type of all the bloody sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual? For what, but that it might be an atonement, an oblation, a propitiation, an *ilasmos*|| for our sins? Suppose it be granted, that the word *atonement* sometimes means reconciliation, the question still is, On what principle are we reconciled? Did not he "become sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him?"** Are we not healed

* Eph. v. 26. † John xv. 16. ‡ Titus ii. 12. § Acts ii. 23.
¶ Heb. vii. 26. || 1 John ii. 2. ** 2 Cor. v. 21.

healed by his stripes? Are we not redeemed by his precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish? Hence it is, that so much is made, in the New Testament, of the *cross*. This, indeed, is, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to some ancient and modern philosophers it is foolishness. But the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

Finally, He who preaches Christ, preaches him in his example, "Looking unto Jesus, the author, and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame."* What was the most conspicuous trait in the example of Christ? It was the deep condescension of the most consummate benevolence. "He who was in the form of God, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."† This was the most perfect benevolence, of which we can form any conception. And it will forever remain as the sum of the glory of Christ, both with respect to its propitiatory influence, and its influence as an example. Thus it is estimated by the Father. For thus it is said in the following words, "*Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."‡ To say that it is impossible, that a divine person should humble himself, under the pretence, that he must be incapable of changing his condition, of moving from one situation to another, and of laying aside his glory, is to substitute a carnal philosophy in the place of divine testimony; it is to reduce the Deity to the laws of limited beings, and to deny the whole glory of Christ's redemption, If

* Heb. xii. 2. † Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. ‡ Phil. ii. 9, 10.

If you say, that a creature, only, humbled himself, where, I pray you, was the astonishing depth of his humiliation? How much did it exceed the humiliation of Paul? "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily."*

If we would preach the example of Christ, we must, therefore, preach a finished benevolence. If we would live after the example of Christ, we must live lives of the most condescending benevolence. We must act on the scale of a deep self-denial. Christ came down, in fact, infinitely low, to sustain, for his father's glory, and in behalf of his mystical body, sufferings, which he did not deserve. And cannot we come down so low as to feel reconciled, on supposition the glory of God, and the best good of the universe require it, to sustain those eternal sufferings, which we do deserve? At least, can we hesitate to bear cheerfully, all the trials, to which an active benevolence may call us?

III. We come now, in the last place, to consider the end in effect, to which the labors of a faithful christian Minister are directed. And we shall find it to be the most beneficent. For it is the salvation of those, to whom he preaches. "And ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." So pure, so elevated, so godlike, is the motive of the christian Minister. He loves you, my brethren, with a disinterested love. He longs to snatch you as brands from the burning. He longs to associate you with believers, and to establish you as "heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, unto an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away." Under the stimulus of this love, he becomes your servant, in the most self-denying circumstances. He labors for you. He prays for you. He suffers for you.

* Col. ii. 8, 9.

you. His heart rejoices over *you* who become penitent ; and bleeds over *you* who remain impenitent. Need I verify these observations by argument ? Let us appeal to our Apostle, whose spirit certainly actuates the breast of every true Minister of Jesus. What strong benevolence does he express towards his perishing countrymen, many of whom were among his bitterest adversaries, in those memorable words, recorded in the fore part of the ixth chapter of his epistle to the Romans ; “ I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ ; for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Let us appeal to the divine law, the spirit of which every true Minister of Jesus must be supposed to feel. “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and *thy neighbor as thyself.*” Let us appeal to the nature of the whole system of grace, which forms the substance of divine revelation. Is it not a system of salvation, presented to mankind for their highest possible benefit ? Some love to confound the law and the gospel, obligation and grace. The use which has just now been made of the law supposes that it is a benevolent law. It demands benevolence, and it holds out to view benevolent rewards. But the gospel, or that plan of redeeming grace, which it was the primary design of the inspiration of the holy scriptures to reveal, is benevolent on an eminent scale, and to a superlative extent. And no man can enter into the spirit of this system, and become a thorough preacher of it, without feeling the ardor of that good will to man, with which it necessarily inspires all who embrace it, and which the language of the Apostle in our text so strongly expresseth ; a good will, which shall prompt the feeling Minister to labor, to pray, to urge, and to redouble, and perpetuate his diligence in this service, till his last breath ; never

er relaxing his efforts, through discouragement at the obstinacy, with which you repel them ; never relinquishing his hope of gaining you to Christ ; always hanging around your immortal souls with the fondness of maternal anxiety, till death puts an end to all means, and leaves him weepingly to mourn over you, in the language of the weeping Redeemer ; “ If thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.”*

I shall confine the improvement of what has been said to four reflections, and two or three subsequent addresses.

1. Our first reflection respects the honorable, and pleasurable nature of the christian Ministry. Honorable and pleasurable it is both, my brethren. Why is it honorable ? Because it is virtuous, truly, sublimely virtuous. It is service. What service ? That which we have described ; the same service, which Jesus Christ rendered to guilty men, when he gave up his life on the cross ; the same service, which the Apostles rendered to their fellow creatures, when they could say, “ But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”† The true christian Minister is a servant. “ And ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” He is a servant, not on a mercenary, but on a benevolent principle. He labors, he suffers, he prays in constant self-denial, through love to Christ, and in pursuit of the eternal happiness of his fellow creatures, some of whom may be his enemies and persecutors. This is true honor, this is true dignity. Never can a man appear with more dignity, than when he cheerfully descends to the labors and sufferings of a servant, upon this benevolent scale. Never did the
charms

* Luke xix. 42.

† Acts xx. 24.

charms of celestial virtue appear with more captivating glory, than when Jesus Christ suffered on the cross. Suppose, then, that all that the Deist contends for be granted, that the Minister of Christ is in a mistake, and that his hope is a delusion; you cannot, if you have the least portion of true moral discernment, but applaud the generosity, by which he is actuated. Pleasurable, too, the ministry is to the good man. True, in some respects, it is a thorny road. The same cup must be drunk, of which Christ drank. But what a pleasure it is even to love Christ? What pleasure even in the effort of endeavoring to do good, on that scale, in which there is a perfect harmony between God, and all virtuous minds!

2. Our second reflection shall be a censure upon those, who admire that a man of talents can find any inducement to take upon himself the profession of a Minister; and upon those, who take this profession upon themselves from selfish motives. With respect to the first, what shall I say? How does our subject condemn them? How does all virtue condemn them? Into what a grave of moral darkness, and depravity are they sunk? O ye strangers to the love of Jesus; ye whose souls are void, absolutely void of all the kindness of the humble christian; how has the God of this world blinded your eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of God, should shine unto you? Ye can find motives to ambition, to avarice, and to lewdness; but none to serve men for Jesus' sake. How unfit are you for the society of Patriarchs and Apostles in glory? With respect to the second class we are equally at a loss to find words to express our compassion, and our detestation. A young man spends four years at a College. He takes his diploma. The question then is, What shall I do? What business shall I follow? How shall I make sure of a decent livelihood? He looks round, and finds the professions of law and physic full, and doubts, whether

whether his talents will justify a hope of outstripping those, who have already entered the race. Preparation, also, must be long, and expensive. He sinks back with discouragement at the gloom of the prospect. His last road is preaching. Here are small pecuniary inducements, but they are the best, for which he can calculate, and they must do. He thinks he can at least live, live comfortably, and decently. A few he sees popular, caressed, and even opulent. The entrance is easy, the danger small. He concludes, and proceeds. O blind, and insatuated youth! How miserably will you preach yourself, instead of Christ Jesus the Lord! How ignorant, how deceived! How likely to deceive others! What a heartless, prayerless, and indolent Minister will you probably be! Of what a prostitution of the sacred service of Christ, are you guilty! How dreadful will be your account, at the last great day, unless sovereign grace open your eyes!

3. How short is a very great portion of the preaching of the present day, of apostolic preaching? If it be objected to us by the advocates of deism, we deny the force of the objection, but we do not contradict the fact, that the nominal church of Christ is a heterogeneous body, and that its Ministers are extremely heterogeneous characters. One church, we admit, is established on essentially different principles, from those of another; and we rather contend for it as a truth, than deny it as a falsehood, that one sort of preaching is essentially dissimilar to another. Had some Ministers addressed you on this occasion, from the passage before us, what a smooth, undistinguishing, unalarming, and self-flattering kind of preaching, would the preaching of Christ have been exhibited to be? There were false prophets among the people in remote antiquity. There were false Christs, and false Apostles in the period of the first establishment of christianity, who brought in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought

bought them. And how can it rationally be expected, that the church, at the present day, should be exempt from the corruptive inroads of similar criminal intruders ; whose labors are directed, not to the propagation, but to the subversion of fundamental christian doctrines ; and who even make, by their strange reasonings and constructions, virtue vice, and vice virtue. Thus it will probably be till the advent of that glorious era, in which there shall be a complete fulfilment of the prophetic promise, " And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge, and understanding."* " Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing ; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."† Facts at the present day, exhibit a picture extremely unlike to this, which is drawn in the scriptures, of the millennial glory. You, brethren, must distinguish. You must sift opinions, by bringing them to the standard of that orthodoxy, which you find in your Bibles. " To the law, and to the testimony."‡ Be not seduced by the tinsel of an ornamented diction, or the fictitious smile of a fascinating catholicism. If a man, in your hearing, strip God of his prerogatives, Jesus Christ of his divinity, the Holy Spirit of his personality and influence, attack the doctrines of grace, set about mending the old heart, instead of insisting upon the preternatural creation of a new one ; or if he substitute a mock morality, in the place of true holiness, and make the cross bow to the Babel of hypocritical works, called good, while they are as filthy rags : Pause, examine, and ask, whether the man be preaching as Paul preached—whether he be preaching himself or Christ Jesus the Lord.

4. Our last point of improvement, shall respect those, who have the privilege of hearing the gospel faithfully preached. Are men favored with Ministers,

* Jer. iii. 15.

† Isa. lii. 8.

‡ Isa. viii. 20.

ters, formed to their work by supernatural grace, who are stimulated by the powerful principle of love to Christ Jesus, and who aim sincerely, with all their might, to promote the eternal salvation of their fellow men, and who, under the influence of such views and feelings, preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; how grateful have they reason to be to God for such an inestimable blessing ? The pious mind appreciates this favor far beyond any temporal enjoyment. To what a diligent improvement should such a blessing be reduced ? How exceedingly criminal, in the sight of God, must those be, who despise this ministry, who resist its influence, who labor to sink it into discredit, and who will not be persuaded by it to return to God by a cordial repentance ? How assuredly will it operate with a terrible fatality, as a favor of death unto death to them ? What a tremendous account will they be forced to render, to their slighted Judge, at the final audit ? With what anguish will a remembrance, of a persevering and obstinate resistance of this rich grace of God, thus dispensed, penetrate their bleeding souls ? With what sighs and groans will they mourn at last, and say, " How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me ?"*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

YOU will not consider it as an expression of immodesty, but of affectionate love to you, that I ask you to apply the whole weight of this discourse to your own soul. You are now solemnly devoting yourself to the employment of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, with a particular respect to the everlasting salvation of this people. You are now to be formally consecrated to this work, by the imposition of the hands of a Christian Presbytery, and by prayer.

* Prov. v. 12, 13.

prayer. You have long been under the bonds of a
 christian profession. You will henceforth be under
 the additional bonds of a deliberate dedication of
 yourself to the christian Priesthood. O that you
 may be diligent, so as to be found of your Judge in
 peace! It is a pleasure to me, it is a pleasure to
 your Brethren, present, it must be a pleasure to all
 the friends of piety, who are spectators of this sol-
 emn transaction, that we are at liberty to place con-
 fidence in you, or rather in the grace of God which
 is in you, that you will, faithfully, and affectionately
 preach, *not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*
 You will, how can you but, love, to take the place
 of a servant; in a humble, and constant endeavor to
 promote the eternal salvation of these precious souls,
 which are now solemnly committed to your special
 care. In this great, and good work, my dear brother,
 go on, and prosper. He who desireth the office
 of a Bishop, desireth a good work. Having desired,
 you are, with the unanimous consent, and satisfac-
 tion of this Council, today invested with this office.
 Sustain it with dignity, with purity, with singular
 assiduity. But I will not anticipate the Charge,
 which is to be given you by God, from the lips
 of your eldest brother. I will only express to
 you, what indeed you know perfectly already, that
 it is my fervent prayer, that you may be honored
 with the greatest glory, with which any human be-
 ing can be crowned, that of turning many unto
 righteousness. In hope, that God designs thus to
 honor you, I consent to sacrifice that intimate brotherly
 intercourse, which we have so long enjoyed, the
 benefit of your influence in the Church under my
 care, and all the comforts of that domestic inti-
 macy, in which our families have so richly shared.
 In this hope, I even rejoice to be contributive to
 your establishment in this part of the vineyard of our
 common Lord; and with an affectionate adieu cast
 you upon those precious promises, which are our
 only,

only, but adequate support, under all the labors, and trials, of this changeful, this tempestuous, this dying world.

This last expression compels me to add a thought more. You, and I, and our respective congregations, are sinking down to the grave. Very soon must you meet all this charge of yours at the tribunal of Christ. Some of them you will probably meet as redeemed saints, vessels of mercy prepared unto glory ; and some of them you will meet as incorrigible sinners, vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction. What a solemn reflection ! Now, ah how precious the moment ! now is the day of hope, of labor, and salvation. Be steadfast, then, and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, that, so doing, your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

THE Church and Congregation in this Town, will accept of our congratulations upon the interesting event, of the first establishment of a regular christian ministry in the place, in which God has fixed the bounds of their habitations ; and, which, but a few years since, exhibited nothing to the eye, but the waving tufts of an unlimited forest. How pleasing to see the uncultivated wilderness yield to the axe and to the plough ; to see ripened harvests, and an exuberant plenty, where the improvements of civilization had never reached ? How much more pleasing, that the praises of God should be sung, where, but a little time ago, nothing was heard, but the warwhoop of the savage ? What an auspicious event, that the regular, and faithful preaching of Christ, and the administration of his holy ordinances, should be superadded to your other enjoyments ? How guilty, then, O how guilty will you be, how terrible will be your damnation, if you will not hear, if you will not believe, if you will trample under foot the Son of God ? This is not, my dear friends, no, it is not, an indifferent affair. This ordination

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is not a mere amusing transaction, an occurrence of the moment, in which you are little concerned. The eternal state of every one of you is to be deeply affected by it. The preaching of Christ, which you will henceforth enjoy, will be, certainly it will be, a favor of life unto life, or a favor of death unto death, to every soul of you. How can it be, but that the faithful, fervent, and repeated application of pungent truth amongst you, enforced by a holy example, and recommended by a tender spirit, should enhance your loathsomeness under the eye of God, and consummate your preparedness for an aggravated punishment, if you refuse to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord? If you hear in the spirit of a cordial return to your heavenly Father; if to you the name of Christ be as ointment poured forth; if the preaching of Christ draw tighter and tighter the bonds of love between you and him, how rich will be your consolations, during your short journey to the grave; what beams of glory will probably irradiate your way, through the dark valley of the shadow of death; with what transport, with what exquisite joy of heart, will you meet your beloved Pastor, each other, and all the people of Christ, on the heights of Zion; and with what bliss will you dwell in the bosom of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, forever? But if you will not hear, O how calamitous will be your situation! how insupportable will be your doom! with what terrible vengeance will Christ resent your contempt of him; and how much more intolerable will be your state eternally, than if you never had heard of the glorious gospel? The Lord give you all eyes to see, and ears to hear. The Lord be with you, bless you, build you up, give you, and your Pastor much reason to rejoice together. The Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace. "Happy is that people, which is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."*

LET

* Psalm cxliv. 15.

LET this whole assembly be impressed with the solemnity of this transaction. Let saints rejoice. Let sinners tremble. "Lo ! how Zion flourisheth ; how she lengtheneth her cords and strengtheneth her stakes !"* "Verily the wilderness, and the solitary place is glad for her, and the desert rejoiceth, and blossometh as the rose. It blossometh abundantly, and rejoiceth even with joy and singing ; the glory of Lebanon is given unto her, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Great is the peace of her children. But the sinner perisheth out of Zion."† "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment ? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish forever, like his own dung. He shall fly away as a dream, yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night."‡ "He that believeth not shall be damned."§ Probably, many of you are of this awful character. "Kiss, then, the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they, who trust in him."||—AMEN.

* Isa. liv. 2.

† Isa. xxxv. 1. 2.

‡ Job xx. 5—8.

§ Mar. xvi. 16.

|| Psalm iv. 12.

THE
C H A R G E.

BY THE

REV. NOAH WORCESTER, of THORNTON.

AN occasion, like this, calls into view a train of objects, calculated, in the highest degree, to solemnize the mind, and penetrate the heart. The character

character of God, the criminality of man, the worth of souls, the compassion of a Redeemer, a final judgment, and an endless retribution, are ideas intimately connected with the transactions of this day. And unitedly demand the most awful solemnity.

With these, and other relative ideas, it is hoped, dear Brother, that your mind is, in some degree, suitably impressed.

In the presence of God, his holy angels, and a multitude of human witnesses, you have been solemnly set apart to the work of the Gospel Ministry—a work, most serious in its nature, important, and everduring in its consequences.

From the charge given by Christ, to his disciples, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, or the charge given by Paul to Timothy, probably originated the established custom in Ordaining Councils, of making a solemn address to the person newly invested with the ministerial office.

We claim no equality with the Great Head of the Church, nor any apostolic preeminence above you, with regard to office. Yet, dear Brother, you will suffer the word of exhortation.

As you are now invested with the ministerial office, unto you are committed the oracles of God. According to which, you are to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, for the edification and comfort of saints, and the conviction and conversion of sinners; to lead in the discipline of the church of Christ; to administer the sacraments of the New Testament; and to be an example to the flock, of which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer.

Study, then, to acquit yourself with fidelity, to approve yourself unto God, and to the consciences of men, a workman, who needeth not to be ashamed.

Aim at a deep and intimate acquaintance with God, with Christ, with the holy scriptures, with your own heart, with pure religion, and with human nature.

— Preach

Preach the word in a plain, faithful, distinguishing, affectionate, and solemn manner ; so as to alarm the stupid, instruct the inquisitive, and comfort the humble. Adapt your discourses to the capacities and circumstances of your hearers, that persons of every description may have their portion in due season. Feed the flock with the pure and substantial bread of the gospel ; and not with such unprofitable trash as bigotry, superstition, vain imaginations, or empty sounds.

Lead in the discipline of the church, with a tender, strict, and impartial hand. Endeavor to support such discipline as will tend to seclude the hypocritical, invite the sincere, correct the erroneous, reclaim the wandering, and promote fellowship through the body. That all, who see the walk of the church, may have this evidence, that they are the disciples of Christ, viz. *that they have love one to another.*

Acquaint yourself with the design of Christ, as to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And in administering them to others, make proper distinction, between the holy and profane, the clean and the unclean,

By your example, be a constant Preacher of Jesus Christ. In all companies, and on all occasions, support the dignity of your office, by a corresponding deportment. By your seriousness and circumspection, keep alive, in the minds of others, a sense of the omnipresence of Jehovah. In your deportment, unite affability with becoming reservedness, christian cheerfulness with ministerial gravity, patience and meekness with holy fortitude, and inflexible opposition to sin. Thus you will, at once, command reverence, gain access to the consciences of men, rid yourself of the company of the incorrigibly vain, and secure the society of those, by whom you can profit, and to whom you can be profitable.

Beware of men. Beware of their cunning, their flattery, and their malice.

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If you should be reproached for righteousness' sake, you may be happy in this reflection, That it is enough for the servant, that he be as his Master.

If persecution should fall to your lot, fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. But rather fear him, who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him.

And ever realize the comforting import of these words of our blessed Lord : Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Now we commend you to the grace of God, which is able to keep you in all your ways, to make you a burning and shining light in this degenerate age, and a star of distinguished radiance in the kingdom of glory forever. AMEN,

THE

RIGHT HAND of FELLOWSHIP.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS WORCESTER, of SALISBURY.

THE holy religion of our divine Lord, forms a union between all its subjects, stronger than death, and lasting as eternity.

True christians have all one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Yea, they have one interest, one hope, and are but several members of one body. Though various in their capacities, in their gifts, and in their offices ; yet, they are all in union. They have the same objects of complacence, the same objects of aversion, and pursue one great end, in common with their vital head.

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The work of Christian Ministers is one. By one Spirit they are qualified, called, and sent to labor in the same vineyard. They preach one doctrine, one gospel, one Jesus. They serve one master, even Christ; and their various gifts are all for the building up of his kingdom; for the edification of his body in love. Hence may be seen the propriety and beauty, of the early, and long observed practice of giving the Right Hand of Fellowship, on occasions like the present.

This is not an empty, or unmeaning ceremony, but full of signification. It speaks the affectionate friendship, the cordial union, which true Ministers feel; the fellowship they have; their mutual dependence, under Christ; their indispensable obligations, and hearty readiness to act like brethren, and help one another, as circumstances require. Impressed with such sentiments, agreeably to the appointment, and in the name of this Council, dear Brother, I give you my hand. We congratulate you upon this public and solemn dedication of yourself to the great and good work of the Gospel Ministry. We bid you a cordial welcome to an equal official part in the vineyard of our Lord. We wish success may attend your labors. May your heart be greatly rejoiced, by the displays of divine grace, in giving success to your ministry, in the conviction of many sinners, and in the growth of many believers. May you experience much of his gracious, supporting and comforting presence, who is head over all things to the church.

We pledge our own ordination, and christian vows, to act the part of brethren and fellow workers together with God towards you; assisting you, and striving with you for Zion's prosperity, as God in his providence may call, expecting the same from you. O may we indeed help one another, in the kingdom of Christ. May we manifest a union, which shall cause his friends to rejoice, and his enemies

mies to tremble. May we strengthen each other's hands, and encourage each other's hearts, in this day of trial. May we ever be found valiant for the truth, valiant for purity in doctrine, in discipline, and example. May we never be overcome by frowns, nor flatteries, by reproaches nor praises, to side with the enemies of the cross of Christ; yet may we let our moderation be known unto all men; and may our zeal ever be according to knowledge. In this way, may we finish our work with joy, and hereafter dwell an eternity together, in the world of light and love.

Brethren of this Church, in thus complying with your request, in setting apart the man you have chosen to the oversight of you in the Lord, we own your visible relation to Christ, as a part of his mystical body. We rejoice with you in the business of this day. We rejoice, that God has provided for you, and set over you one whom (as we trust) he judges faithful. We rejoice, believing you receive him, brethren, as an ascension gift, with grateful hearts. We rejoice, believing you will esteem him highly in love for his work's sake; that you will strive together with him in your prayers; and that you will unite your exertions with his for Zion's interest. May he be a great, a lasting blessing to you. May you walk together as in green pastures by the side of still waters. May the doctrine of Christ, from his lips, distil upon your souls as the dew, and as the rain upon the tender herb. May you experience, in this world, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. And in the world to come may you know how glorious it is for Pastor and people to praise and enjoy God together. May all this society, and many others, have abundant reason to rejoice in what is done this day. O may the grace of God form all our hearts to say with unspeakable joy, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good; that faith unto Zion, thy King reigneth.

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